

ANALYSIS BY THE LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

BACKGROUND

Unions for Government Employees. Groups of government employees—like employees in the private sector—can choose to have a union represent them in negotiations with their employers over salaries, benefits, and other conditions of employment. Individual government employees may choose whether or not to join the union that represents their group of employees. A union’s negotiations affect all employees in the group—both members and nonmembers of the union. As a result, members of the group—whether they join a union or not—typically pay a certain level of dues and/or fees to a union for these bargaining and representation services.

Use of Union Dues or Fees for Political Purposes. A union of government employees may engage in other types of activities unrelated to bargaining and representation. For instance, public employee unions may decide to charge additional dues for various political purposes, including supporting and opposing political candidates and issues. Any fees collected from a nonmember of a union cannot be used

for these types of political purposes if the nonmember objects. Each year, unions must publicly report what share of their expenditures was for political purposes.

PROPOSAL

This measure amends state statutes to require public employee unions to get annual, written consent from a government employee in order to charge and use that employee’s dues or fees for political purposes. This requirement would apply to both members and nonmembers of a union. The measure would also require unions to keep certain records, including copies of any consent forms.

FISCAL EFFECTS

The state and local governments could experience some increased costs to implement and enforce the consent requirements of the measure. The amount of these costs is probably minor. Some of these costs could be partially offset by increased fines for not complying with the measure’s provisions and/or fees charged by government agencies to cover the costs of processing payroll deductions for union dues and fees.